

VZCZCXRO9266  
RR RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD  
DE RUEHHI #0177/01 0461016  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 151016Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7186  
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 4304  
RUEHZN/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3239  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5817  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1351  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0846  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0343  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 1553  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP//  
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1A//  
RUEHSUN/USUN ROME IT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 HANOI 000177

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH  
STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (STIEGER/VALDEZ/DMILLER/HICKEY)  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)  
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO OGHA (WSTIEGER/LVALDEZ/CHICKEY) AND  
FIC/NIH (RGLASS) AND DIV-FLU (COX/MOHEN)  
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC (MALISON), USAID (MACARTHUR/BRADY) BANGKOK FOR  
APHIS (NCARDENAS), REO(JWALLER)  
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE (ROSS)  
PHNOM PENH FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR(BRADY)  
ROME FOR FAO  
VIENTIANE FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR (CORWIN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [KFLU](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE - VIETNAM'S SECOND AI FATALITY OF  
2008

REF: A. HANOI 80 B. 07 HANOI 2116

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1. (U) Summary: Government of Vietnam (GVN) officials confirmed the second and third human Avian Influenza (AI) fatalities of 2008, both from northern provinces close to Hanoi. A 40-year old male from Hai Duong province died on February 13 after cooking and eating dead chickens. A 27-year old male from Ninh Binh province died on February 15 after slaughtering sick chickens. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Department of Animal Health (DAH) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have sent response teams to the victims' villages. However, once again the MOH failed to provide timely notification to the World Health Organization (WHO). End Summary.

#### 50 Fatalities Since Onset of Avian Influenza

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2.(U) The GVN confirmed the second and third AI-related human fatalities of 2008, a 40-year old man from Quang Bi hamlet, Pham Chau Village, Gia Loc District, Hai Duong province, roughly 50 kilometers from Hanoi, and a 27-year old man from Ninh Binh

province, approximately 100 kilometers south of Hanoi. Vietnam now has suffered eight deaths and 11 infections since the most recent wave of AI outbreaks began in May 2007 and 50 fatalities and 104 human infections since the initial outbreak of AI in 2003. Each of the last eight reported human infections resulted in death.

#### Hai Duong Fatality

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¶3. (U) A 40-year old man from Hai Duong province died at noon on Feb 13 at the National Institute for Infectious and Tropical Diseases (NIITD) following four days of treatment, including mechanical ventilation and hemoperfusion. According to press reports, the patient arrived on February 9 already suffering from severe pneumonia and internal organ failure. He had been ill for six days prior to initial hospitalization at Hai Duong Provincial Hospital. The Director General of the Vietnam Administration of Preventative Medicine within the MOH, Nguyen Huy Nga, stated that the man had cooked and consumed, along with his family, at least two dead chickens. Authorities subsequently found numerous dead chickens around the man's residence and DAH noted that nine of the man's 12 fighting cocks had died since late January.

¶4. (SBU) The National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE) was notified of the suspect case on February 9, responded promptly, and reported confirmatory laboratory test results on February 10. However, MOH only notified the WHO on February 14 -- a day after the local press reported the case - although WHO International Health Regulation guidelines stipulate reporting within 24 hours. The Hai Duong Preventative Medicine Center sent an investigation and control team to the man's village to conduct case detection and surveillance and sterilize the environment (including wells) surrounding the patient's residence with chloramine. The response team reportedly was unable to provide oseltamivir (Tamiflu) to family members and neighbors due to the available medication already passing its

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expiration date necessitating VAPM sending additional medication from its central stocks. To date, we have seen no reports of additional human infections in this village. Both the DAH and the MOH have since sent investigation and control teams to the area and MOH invited a WHO epidemiologist to join.

#### Death in Ninh Binh

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¶5. (SBU) VAPM confirmed today to USAID that a 27-year old man infected by the H5N1 virus died yesterday. According to NIHE, the Ninh Binh resident slaughtered sick chickens on January 31 and became ill two days later. His fever worsened on February 7 and he was admitted to Army Hospital Number 5 in Ninh Binh on February 11 and transferred to Bach Mai hospital in Hanoi on February 12. Bach Mai received a positive H5N1 confirmation test on February 13. NIHE collected an additional sample but has not yet reported results. The MOH sent a response team today to the residence. Though MOH has discussed this case with the local WHO office, it has not yet provided official notification.

#### Recent Animal outbreaks

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¶6. (U) In addition to the two recent human fatalities (and related poultry deaths), Vietnam currently has ongoing animal outbreaks in northern Thai Nguyen and central Quang Binh province, according to DAH. Most recently, on February 11, DAH reported an outbreak in Tan Lap ward of Thai Nguyen city where local authorities culled 700 ill-looking ducks. A January 29-30 outbreak in Hong Thuy province in Quang Binh killed 100 ducks in three flocks totaling 5,300 birds. Though 3,800 of the ducks had received vaccinations, not enough time had elapsed to build up immunity. DAH and local authorities culled the flocks and took other preventive actions. Also on January 29, 1,200 chickens in a 4,165 bird flock died in Thai Nguyen. The remaining birds subsequently were culled. The two to four month old chickens had been vaccinated on December 21. Quang Binh had suffered an additional animal outbreak on January 23, when over 1,000 50-day old and unvaccinated ducks became infected in Hong

Thuy Commune, Le Thuy district.

Comment:

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17. (SBU) Unlike the two previous human fatalities (reftels), these two patients resided in high-risk provinces in the Red River delta close to Hanoi and in which the GVN has focused its AI response campaign (including mandatory vaccinations of chickens and ducks). Nevertheless, the facts of this case are quite familiar - and involve the handling, preparation, and consumption of sick or already dead poultry. Although the overall number and intensity of animal outbreaks remains substantially lower than this time period last year, human exposure through high risk behaviors, such as handling and preparing sick or already dead poultry, appear common in some areas.

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18. (SBU) Comment cont'd: During the Lunar New Year, or Tet, which stretched from February 5 to February 11, huge numbers of Vietnamese return to their ancestral villages and the consumption of chicken is an important holiday ritual. The holidays also leave medical facilities and government agencies short staffed and sick persons often are reluctant to seek care during the celebrations. This may account for the late diagnosis of the disease and for what appears to be another failure by the MOH to promptly notify the WHO of the infection. Though we are pleased by the inclusion of a WHO epidemiologist as part of the MOH response team, once again, we will work with WHO to remind our Vietnamese interlocutors of the need for prompt notification to ensure proper international response.

19. (SBU) Comment cont'd: Importantly and disturbingly, in several recent cases, we have seen human infections in the absence of detection of or reporting by authorities of pre-existing animal AI outbreaks in the patient's village or commune. Only after human victims were hospitalized did local authorities note ill or dead poultry. In essence, human cases have been serving as sentinels of avian infection, which is the opposite of how the sentinel surveillance system should work. End comment.

MICHALAK